

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4-12, 14-22 and 24-30 previously presented for examination remain in the application. Claims 1, 11 and 21 have been amended to expedite allowance. Claims 3, 13 and 23 have been canceled without prejudice. No new claims have been added.

Claims 7-10, claims 17-20 and claims 27-30 are indicated as being allowable.

Claims 3, 4, 13 and 23 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 5, 14, 15, 24 and 25 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant has amended claims 1, 11 and 21 to incorporate the limitations of claims 3, 13 and 23, respectively such that amended claims 1, 11 and 21 are equivalent in scope to claims 3, 13 and 23 amended to incorporate the base claim and any intervening claims. Additionally, claims 1, 11 and 21 have been amended to address the 35 U.S.C § 112, second paragraph issue identified below.

For at least these reasons, claims 1, 11 and 21 should now be in condition for allowance.

Claims 2 and 4-6, claims 12 and 14-16 and claims 22 and 24-26 depend from and further limit claims 1, 11 and 21, and thus, should also be found to be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 3, 4, 13 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being considered to be indefinite. Claims 3, 13 and 23 have been canceled rendering the rejection with respect to these claims moot. As mentioned above, however, the language of claims 3, 13 and 23 has been incorporated into independent claims 1, 11 and 21, respectively. While applicant continues to traverse this rejection for the reasons set forth in the prior response, applicant respectfully submit that amended claims 1, 11 and 21 address the Examiner's rejections and meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claims 1, 6, 11 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being considered to be unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,721,892 to Osborn et al. ("Osborn") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,958,058 to Barrus ("Barrus").

Claims 2 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being considered to be unpatentable over Osborn and Barrus and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,796,939 to Berc et al. ("Berc").

Claims 21 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being considered to be unpatentable over Osborn and Barrus and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,112,164 to Hobson et al. ("Hobson").

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being considered to be unpatentable over Osborn in view of Barrus, Berc and Hobson.

For at least the reasons discussed above, these rejections have been overcome and the respective claims should be in condition for allowance.

Based on the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that the applicable objections and rejections have been overcome and claims 1-2, 4-12, 14-22 and 24-30 are in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner disagrees or believes that further discussion will expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone applicant's representative at the number indicated below.

If there are any charges, please charge Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION
(37 C.F.R. § 1.8(a))

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted by facsimile to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on January 12, 2006.

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